



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Baltimore District

The Corps'pondent

a newsletter by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the residents of Spring Valley

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Cleanup moving forward on many fronts

by Gary Schilling
Program Manager

Lot 18 excavation

The Lot 18 dig site has been closed down since Aug. 25 and remains under guard. Currently, the team expects to re-start digging in November. The Spring Valley partners — the Corps, D.C. Health Department and the Environmental Protection Agency — are examining ways in which productivity at Lot 18 can be increased.

All seven “suspect” items recovered during the summer’s excavation were sent to the Edgewood Chemical and Biological Center for further analysis. All have been cleared and confirmed not to contain chemical warfare materiel.

Analyses to identify their chemical contents are ongoing. The results will be placed on the project’s web site.

Small Disposal Area report

The report has been finalized and will be placed in the Administrative Record at the Palisades Library.

Residential property anomaly investigations

The partners agreed on the next 15 residential properties that will be investigated geophysically to determine if any

underground anomalies are present that require intrusive investigation. At least eight of these properties will be assessed in Fiscal Year ‘05. The remaining seven will be assessed in either Fiscal Year ‘05 or ‘06, as funding allows.

Groundwater investigation

Five piezometers, which are devices that measure groundwater elevation, have been installed in conjunction with the upcoming groundwater study.

The partners met Oct. 7. The Restoration Advisory Board’s technical advisor and Washington Aqueduct representatives also participated. One of the goals was to develop a monitoring network to provide usable data by the end of the fiscal year that will help determine whether groundwater from Spring Valley is flowing toward the reservoir. The group talked about the issue and agreed that more discussion is needed.

In addition, agreement was tentatively reached on locations for monitors at two known source areas: 52nd Court and an area near the intersection of Rockwood Parkway and Glenbrook Road.

Soil removal

Corps contractors removed arsenic-affected soil at proper-



Soil samples are extracted for phytoremediation study.

Photo by Ted or Ed???

ties on Sedgwick and Warren Streets, bringing the total now completed to 5 of the 113 properties requiring remediation under the non-time-critical-removal action. Activities are underway at two properties on 48th Street.

In response to a suggestion made by a resident at a Restoration Advisory Board meeting, the Corps held an open house for the remaining non-time-critical-removal-action property owners Oct. 6. Representatives from the Corps, the contractor, EPA and D.C. Health met with residents, answered their questions and addressed their concerns.

Phytoremediation

Plant and soil samples were collected the week of Sept. 27 from the three properties where ferns are being tested. The samples will be analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of phytoremediation in addressing contaminated soil in Spring Valley.

Communication key to successful cleanup

by Ted Henry
Community Outreach Team

The Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site investigation and cleanup is one of the most complicated in the country. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington, D.C., Department of Health, commonly referred to as the *partners*, work together as a team to make project decisions and prioritize work that needs to be done before the cleanup can be considered complete.

As the project moves forward, the partners continuously evaluate the priorities they have set in relation to current stakeholder needs, new project information, available scientific data and other information that may warrant additional investigation or more immediate action.

It is important to understand how this partnership works and who to contact in order to better understand a specific project issue, how a decision has been made, ask a question or express a concern.

How decisions are made

The most visible component of our partnering process is the monthly meetings where the partners make collective decisions. The four voting members represent:

- *The Corps' Baltimore District* – responsible for overall project management;
- *The Corps' Huntsville Engineering and Support Center* – the project experts on the investigation and cleanup of chemical warfare materiel;

- *D.C. Health* – the local regulatory authority and lead agency in public health issues associated with the project; and

- *EPA* – the federal regulatory agency responsible for ensuring protection of human health and the environment.

This partnering process is based on consensus, ensuring that the participating agencies work through the issues together and only move forward when agreements have been reached. The partners use technical support from a variety of non-voting partners in assessing project needs and making their decisions. Decisions are captured in meeting minutes, discussed with the Spring Valley Restoration Advisory Board, or RAB, and posted on the project web site at <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm>.

Who are the decision-makers?

For a community member to trust that a cleanup is well managed, it is important that they know who the decision-makers are and how to contact them. To help build this trust, the partners actively work with a variety of stakeholders through phone conferences, e-mail and one-on-one meetings with individual property owners or tenants. The three main points of contact for the partnering agencies are:

- *Corps* – Gary Schilling, 410-962-2210;
- *D.C. Health* – James Sweeney, 202-535-2289; and
- *EPA* – Steve Hirsh, 703-603-0085.

The decisions made by the partnership can be challenging

to understand given the complexity of the project. Community members can contact any of these three with questions or concerns.

Meeting community needs

The Corps also employs an active community outreach team to help receive, track and resolve community concerns. Community members may call **Ben Rooney at 410-962-0157** to obtain the information they need and get their concerns addressed. He can also be contacted via e-mail at Ben.Rooney@usace.army.mil. Rooney communicates regularly with Schilling, Sweeney and Hirsh, and he is an equally effective avenue for getting community concerns to the partners.

The Corps has a **toll-free information line, 800-434-0988**. Residents can use this line to call without charge.

The EPA has a community involvement coordinator assigned to Spring Valley, too. **Bill Hudson** can be reached at **215-814-5532** or by email at hudson.william@epa.gov.

Community members can also meet directly with the partners on the **second Tuesday of every month** between 6:30 and 7 p.m. at St. David's Episcopal Church, 5150 Macomb Street. Following this informal availability session, the RAB meets from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Their monthly meetings are open to the public.

The Corps, EPA and D.C. Health have open-door policies for those who have a need or want to participate. Each individual stakeholder can choose which path to use.

August, September RAB summaries

by Danielle Stern
Community Outreach Team

August

The Restoration Advisory Board met at St. David's Episcopal Church Aug. 10.

The Corps reported the outcome of a recent meeting with owners of a property who have concerns about low levels of mercury on their property and the health of one family member. Representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency and D.C. Department of Health were present at the meeting, and the Corps is awaiting input from the partnering agencies before deciding what type of follow-up is necessary, if any.

Gary Schilling, Spring Valley program manager, presented a macro-schedule, including projections for major work to be done through Fiscal Year '10. The schedule is a working document, and scheduled items could shift, or new items could be added as project priorities change. The schedule is posted on the program's web site and will be updated as needed.

The Science Task Group reported that they had reviewed the Draft Final Small Disposal Area report and dis-

cussed it among their group. The task group felt that the limits of the area were misidentified in 2001 and can now see how the Small Disposal Area fits into the larger Lot 18 investigation. They did not find any "smoking guns" within the report and feel its conclusions are reasonable.

September

At the Sept. 14 meeting, key areas of discussion included ongoing Lot 18 planning, the American University Experiment Station historical records search and Area of Interest Task Force progress.

The Corps provided a summary of the recovered materials for the Fiscal Year '04 work at Lot 18, noting that the project partners have been kept informed via daily e-mail reports, and summaries have been placed on the web site and the project information line. The board also discussed the timeframe for fiscal year 2005 work, which is planned to start in the fall. Fourteen weeks of work are budgeted, and the Corps is looking into ways to increase productivity on the second phase of work.

The Area of Interest Task Force — consisting of Corps, EPA, D.C. Health and board representatives — presented an

update on Areas of Interest, or AOIs, they are investigating. Per the board's request, they focused particularly on the AOIs that originated from the Evergreen List, a list used as a parking lot to track issues raised by the community that are not slated for immediate investigation.

Eight items on the Evergreen List have been identified as AOIs and will be addressed by the task force in upcoming reports. The Corps also explained how the investigation of AOIs and Evergreen List items fit into the project's overall macro-schedule and priorities, which were presented to the board the month before.

A major presentation was given by Martin Gordon, a historian who researched the experiment station's historical records at Fort McClellan, Ala., in 1993 — the same records that are now at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. He provided the board with a background on the research he and his team did, what they were looking for, and how they were instructed to report anything found, including both positive and negative items.

The board also briefly discussed the topic of community health issues. The board was asked to bring any information they had to the table to assist the partners in the ongoing investigation. The discussion centered on who should receive the information and how to collect it.

For more details, please see the meeting minutes on the Spring Valley website: <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm>.

Corps availability sessions precede RAB meetings

The Corps Spring Valley team members hold informal sessions before the Restoration Advisory Board meetings at 6:30 p.m. for community members who would like to discuss issues or ask specific questions. Representatives of EPA and D.C. Health are also usually available at that time.

The Spring Valley RAB meets the second Tuesday of the month from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at St. David's Episcopal Church, 5150 Macomb Street NW. Meetings are open to the public, and there is a community question time at the end of each board meeting.



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Official Business

Media misses marks

Well-meaning journalists sometimes miss the mark. Here are reporting errors about the Spring Valley Formerly Used Defense Site that we've noticed lately.

√ A Sept. 26 Associated Press report on chemical weapons around the world indicates

cleanup efforts at Spring Valley began in 2001.

√ The *Northwest Current's* Sept. 1 article implied that, two and a half years ago, the Corps' annual Spring Valley budget was \$5 million. In fact, the Corps has spent \$9.8 to \$19.8 million at Spring Valley in each of the last five fiscal years. In the

same article, the paper also reported that Lot 18 had yielded "1,500 tons of non-munitions and what the Corps labeled 'explosives of concern-related material.'" Both the quantity and the description were wrong. It's 1,500 *pounds* of items that are *not* related to *either* munitions or explosives.

Updating resident database

Keeping the Spring Valley resident database up to date is an ongoing goal. Maintaining a current database enables the Corps to keep all residents informed about issues and cleanup progress.

If you have moved to Spring Valley in the last two years and have not yet contacted the Corps, please call Ben Rooney at 410-962-0157. If a neighbor has moved to Spring Valley recently, please suggest they contact him.

In addition, residents interested in obtaining project related information about their property should also call Rooney.

Concerns about your health?

The D.C. Department of Health has a medical surveillance system to identify and monitor arsenic-related illnesses among Spring Valley residents.

Residents who have concerns about exposure to arsenic are asked to contact Reana Drummond-Jackson, Medical Affairs Office, 202-671-0733. Dr. Walter Faggett, D.C. Health's interim chief medical officer, oversees the system.

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